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Tamberlaine Canyon Exploration Drilling Project Scoping Document

Ely Ranger District
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
White Pine County, Nevada

Responsible Official: Jose Noriega, District Ranger
For Information Contact: Doug Powell District Geologist
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Tamberlaine Canyon Exploration Drilling Project Scoping Document

The Ely Ranger District is initiating scoping and welcomes your comments on the proposed Tamberlaine Canyon Exploration Drilling Project (Plan of Operations #09-19-01) on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The operator, Kennecott Corporation (Kennecott) has a statutory right to explore for locatable mineral resources on federally administered lands as recognized in the General Mining Law of 1872. The Plan is consistent with the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan of 1986 (IV-50). Locatable Minerals regulations (36 CFR 228-Subpart A) require that all mineral exploration, development, and operations activities be conducted in a manner that minimizes adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources. The Forest Service (FS) is preparing to analyze this project under a categorical exclusion. The responsible official for the Tamberlaine Canyon Exploration Project decision is Jose Noriega, Ely District Ranger.

Location:

The proposed Tamberlaine Canyon Exploration Drilling Project (Project) is located on NFS lands approximately 8 miles southeast of the city of Ely, Nevada near Tamberlaine Canyon located in White Pine County, Nevada (See Figure 1).

Proposed Action Summary:

Kennecott proposes to conduct locatable minerals exploration drilling from eight exploration drilling sites within the Project Area (See Figure 1). Seven of the drill sites would be located along or adjacent to existing roads, one remote site would be accessed by helicopter. Each site would have a maximum footprint of 100' x 100' in order to allow for a diamond drill-rig, drill deck, drilling rods, sumps, water storage, and associated drilling equipment. Helicopter landing zones would be incorporated at each site and would not exceed a 30'x30' disturbance footprint. A minimally cleared overland foot-path connecting each drill site to any helicopter landing zone would also be utilized. All helicopter landing zones would be within 350' of the proposed drill sites. In addition a 200' by 200' staging area would be utilized for staging and storage of equipment and supplies. Total surface disturbance is anticipated to be approximately 4 acres.

The Project Area includes portions of the Duck Creek Mountains Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). Proposed activities within the IRA consist of approximately 1500 feet of cross-country travel and drill pad construction (2 pads) for a total of approximately 0.8 acres of identified disturbance within the IRA. No road construction, reconstruction or timber cutting activities are proposed within the IRA.

The Project would utilize existing roads or helicopter access for all of the drill sites to minimize impacts to natural resources. Drilling would not occur between March 1st and July 15th to minimize impacts to sage grouse and migratory birds.

Surface disturbance would be recontoured to approximate the original contours and would then be seeded with a USFS-approved certified weed free seed mix. Final reclamation of surface disturbances would be completed within one year from the start of operations. All drill holes would be plugged in accordance with the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 534. Minor road maintenance is anticipated during the project.

Opportunity to Comment:

Your written comments, concerns, and suggestions for this project should be sent to Jose Noriega, District Ranger, Ely Ranger District at 825 Ave E, Ely, NV 89301; phone (775) 289-3031, fax (775) 289-2132; or you may hand-deliver your comments during normal business hours from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays to 825 Ave E, Ely. Electronic comments should be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to this email

address: comments-intermt-n-humboldt-toiyabe-ely@usda.gov. Please use the term “Tamberlaine Canyon Project” in the subject line of your email.

To be most effective, Forest Service should receive comments no later than November 22, 2019.

If requested, a copy of all comments provided in response to this letter will be made available to the public. This includes names, addresses and any other information provided with your comments. Comments, names, and contact information of those who comment will be part of the public record for this project. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the District will not be able to send further project information to anonymous commenters.

National Historic Preservation Act Compliance:

Section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) requires federal agencies, including the US Forest Service, to identify and consider the potential effects of its actions on historic properties through a collaborative framework for seeking, discussing and considering the views of the public on how potential adverse effects on historic properties resulting from a proposed Federal action should be addressed. To meet these requirements of Section 106, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will be using the NEPA process in lieu of 36 CFR Part 800, the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 306108).

Additional Information:

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, would be considered part of the public record for this Project and would be available for public inspection and would be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the District will not be able to send further project information to anonymous commenters.

For updated information, this project is listed on the Forest Service Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) at http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=57039. You can also contact Doug Powell, the Ely District Geologist and Project Lead, at (775) 289-5125 or by email at john.d.powell@usda.gov for more information on the environmental analysis process or for general project information.

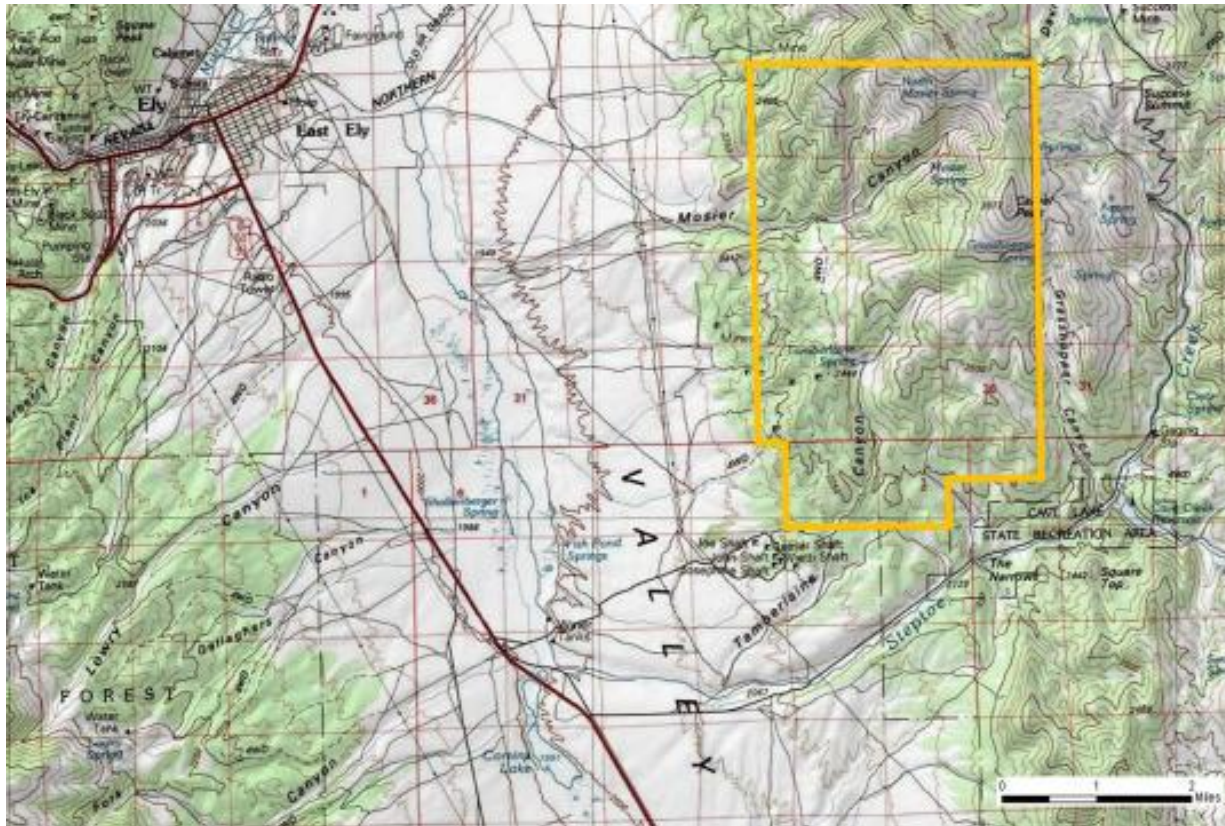
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Figure 1 - Project Area Map.



Project area is southeast of Ely, Nevada near Tamberlaine Canyon (Orange Box).

FS lands within T16N, R64E, Sections 13-15, 22-27, 34-36; T15N, R64E Sections 1-2; T15N, R65E Section 6.